

it a good place to study. I am certain that the strength of this community would not be what it is today without the commitment of this school. I am honored to congratulate the members of the St. Edmund's Elementary School for making it a source of community pride for the past 75 years.

TAX LIMITATION CONSTITUTIONAL
AMENDMENT

SPEECH OF

HON. MICHAEL N. CASTLE

OF DELAWARE

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, April 22, 1998

Mr. CASTLE. Mr. Speaker, I fully support H.J. Res. 111, which calls for an amendment

to the United States Constitution prohibiting passage of tax increases without a two-thirds majority in each house of Congress, except in emergency cases such as military conflict. I have voted for it in the past, am a cosponsor, and am committed to passing the strongest tax limitation amendment possible.

Opponents claim, and will continue to claim, that constitutional amendments on taxing and spending make it harder to operate government as we know it. That is exactly the point—fiscal reality proves to us that we need an instrument, a tool, to control government spending and limit raising taxes.

The Federal Government has run deficits for over 25 years in a row, and for 56 of the last 64 years. This is not a short-term trend, and points to a fundamental flaw in the political system that makes a constitutional solution both necessary and appropriate. Last year,

Congress passed the historic Balanced Budget Agreement as a first step toward fiscal discipline. However, only nine months later, Congress is already breaking the transportation spending caps by \$34 billion inviting criticism that fiscal discipline was just a fad for Congress. We need to pass H.J. Res. 111 to renew our commitment to fiscal discipline. Otherwise, irresponsible spending and higher federal taxes will continue to own us, cripple our economy and mortgage our children's future. Congress needs the legal and moral authority of a Constitutional amendment making it more difficult to raise taxes.

This Congress cannot afford to alienate our constituents by failing to pass this crucial legislation. I urge my colleagues to join us in restoring fiscal responsibility to this institution today, not tomorrow, and not next year.